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own efforts in time of scarcity. Each woman cares for her own children only. She keeps food for an absent child, but will offer some to a co-wife's child only if it asks her for it. But the man will give food to all his children. As a rule, he eats the portion sent in by his senior wife and tastes a little from each dish brought in by the others. When he has had his fill he calls his children to come and eat the rest, always remembering those who have not had enough. Thus the discrepancy in the distribution of grain, where each woman gets the same share irrespective of the number of mouths she has to feed, is adjusted by the man in his fair re-distribution of the cooked food.

This general pattern is not a rigid one, but is adapted to the structure of every household and to its special circumstances, e.g. a man would eat with his wife and small children from a common dish if they happened to be alone in the compound. To do so if another wife were present would cause envy and quarrelling between the women; these arrangements are a matter of etiquette and not of taboo.

The natives account for the custom of a man's eating with his 'youngest' child on the grounds that a child must eat properly in order to grow and must be taught to do so. They say, also, that it thus learns to know its father, and not only its mother whom it is always following about. We have not sufficient material to judge the validity of this interpretation; it is quoted here to indicate the native valuation of the sharing of food in the family.

Infants are given morsels of porridge as soon as they can swallow solid food, and by the age of 18 months can feed themselves dexterously. They are weaned by the age of three not by a forcible or harsh separation from the breast, but by gradual habituation to adult food. The emphasis on the adequate feeding of children is shown, also, in the manner in which *sayakɔt*, left-over porridge, is reserved for them. Porridge remaining after the noon meal is stirred into the porridge cooked at sunset; if it is left after the evening meal it is given to children cold for breakfast next day. Only after they have eaten their fill will adults have some. In the months of plenty children often have a morning meal of *sayakɔt*; at other times a handful of ground-nuts, or a dish of flour-water or of dawa-dawa powder must suffice.

Flour-water (*zɔmkwom*) deserves a note to itself. There are two ways

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272 of preparing it. The usual way is to mix the flour with water into a stiff dough, then knead it into a smooth, flat cake (*zɔmgar*), and place it in a calabash which is filled with water. A hasty method consists in merely pouring water over a handful of flour and stirring it up with the hand. This is *zɔmsaka*. As porridge is the ideal food so *zɔmkuom* is the ideal everyday beverage. It is the drink offered to guests, and the regular libation given to the ancestors. It is also food. When the water has been drunk the flour is eaten by adults and children. *Zɔmkuom*, unlike ground-nuts, forms a hasty meal and is resorted to when cooking is inconvenient.

264 Sporadic eating is a universal habit. It goes on in time of plenty because food abounds, and in time of scarcity because one dare not
262 forego an opportunity of eating anything. When the ground-nuts are nearly ripe people pluck a plant from anybody's field and chew the nuts. When grain is abundant a handful is roasted over a fire and eaten at any time of the day. Nevertheless, the Tallensi are capable of going without food for long stretches at a time.

At the ritual and ceremonial gatherings which take place preponderantly in the dry season but intermittently throughout the year, ritual flour-water or cooked food is often passed round, or ground-nuts distributed to the elders present. At the markets, too, particularly in the months of plenty, both porridge and especially the luxury confections such as *kameha* (fried cakes of cow-pea flour) *maasa* (fried millet cakes) and so on are bought in quantities. The small animals and birds, which children hunt and eat, as well as the ground-nuts they glean, belong to this category of food consumption.

Sporadic eating does not, however, in any way affect the domestic organization of the food economy. The housewife never omits to cook a meal because her children found some titbit for themselves, nor will she even question them about it. The Tallensi do not consider such eating as 'food'; not even in the time of scarcity when meals at home become uncertain.

262 Food taboos, on the other hand, react upon the arrangements for the cooking and distributing of the food. Women never cook fowls or dogs, since they avoid eating them. Men therefore cook these animals for themselves. If a woman observes a totemic taboo, her husband cannot compel her to cook the animal she avoids for him, though he